

§ 97-185. Deposits; surety bonds; letters of credit.

(a) Repealed by Session Laws 2005-400, s. 13, effective January 1, 2006.

(a1) All individual self-insurers as defined in G.S. 97-130(5b) shall participate in the Association Aggregate Security System established under G.S. 97-131 unless excluded by the Board of Directors of the North Carolina Self-Insurance Security Association. The Board of Directors of the North Carolina Self-Insurance Security Association shall exclude all of the following from the Association Aggregate Security System:

- (1) Individual self-insurers whose licenses have previously been revoked by the Commissioner.
- (2) Individual self-insurers with a debt rating as established by Standard & Poor's Rating Service or by Moody's Investor Service, below the minimum Standard & Poor's or Moody's ratings if a minimum debt rating has been established by the Board of Directors of the North Carolina Self-Insurance Security Association for the Association Aggregate Security System.
- (3) Individual self-insurers that have defaulted on the payment of their self-insured workers' compensation liabilities.
- (4) Individual self-insurers that fail to submit sufficient financial information to enable the Association to determine their total outstanding workers' compensation liabilities, or their creditworthiness, or both.

The Board of Directors of the North Carolina Self-Insurance Security Association shall notify the Commissioner of the individual self-insurers that are excluded from participating in the Association Aggregate Security System.

(b) Repealed by Session Laws 2003-115, s. 3, effective January 1, 2004.

(b1) Repealed by Session Laws 2005-400, s. 13, effective January 1, 2006.

(b2) An individual self-insurer that is excluded from participation in the Association Aggregate Security System, including individual self-insurers that are granted a license to self-insure after the North Carolina Self-Insurance Security Association annually implements the Association Aggregate Security System, shall deposit with the Commissioner an amount not less than one hundred percent (100%) of the individual self-insurer's total undiscounted outstanding claims liability per the most recent report from a qualified actuary as required by G.S. 97-180(b), but not less than five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000), or such greater amount as the Commissioner prescribes based on, but not limited to, the financial condition of the individual self-insurer and the risk retained by the individual self-insurer.

(b3) During any period of time that no Association Aggregate Security System is in effect, individual self-insurers with a debt rating of BBB or better from Standard & Poor's Rating Service, a division of McGraw Hill, Inc., or an equivalent rating from another national rating agency shall deposit with the Commissioner an amount not less than fifty percent (50%) of the individual self-insurer's total undiscounted outstanding claims liability per the most recent report from a qualified actuary as required by G.S. 97-180(b), but not less than five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000). An individual self-insurer licensed pursuant to G.S. 97-177 may utilize the debt rating of its guarantor for the purpose of establishing the application of this subsection. The Commissioner shall consider and may, in the Commissioner's discretion, increase or reduce the deposit to a greater or lesser percentage of the individual self-insurer's claims liability based on the financial strength of the individual self-insurer and other financial information submitted by the individual self-insurer. All other individual self-insurers shall deposit with the Commissioner an amount not less than one hundred percent (100%) of the individual self-insurer's total undiscounted outstanding claims liability per the most recent report from a qualified actuary as required by G.S. 97-180(b), but not less than five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000), or such greater amount as the

Commissioner prescribes based on, but not limited to, the financial condition of the individual self-insurer and the risk retained by the individual self-insurer.

(c) Deposits received, changes to existing deposits, or deposits exchanged after the effective date of this section, shall be comprised of one or more of the following:

- (1) Interest-bearing bonds of the United States of America.
- (2) Interest-bearing bonds of the State of North Carolina, or of its cities or counties.
- (3) Certificates of deposit issued by any solvent bank domesticated in the State of North Carolina that have a maturity of one year or greater.
- (4) Surety bonds in a form acceptable to the Commissioner and issued by a corporate surety. A surety bond deposited pursuant to this subsection shall require that the surety reimburse the Commissioner, or his successors, assigns, or transferees, for any costs incurred in the collection of the proceeds of the surety bond, including reasonable attorneys' fees, and any costs incurred in administering the insolvent self-insurer's workers' compensation claims.
- (4a) Irrevocable letters of credit in a form acceptable to the Commissioner issued by a bank acceptable to the Commissioner. An irrevocable letter of credit deposited pursuant to this subsection shall require that the bank reimburse the Commissioner, or his successors, assigns, or transferees for any costs incurred in the collection of the proceeds of the letter of credit, including reasonable attorneys' fees.
- (4b) The reimbursement of attorneys' fees and collections cost provided for in subdivisions (4) and (4a) of this subsection shall be no greater than fifteen percent (15%) of the penal amount of the bond and shall not come from the proceeds of the bond or the letter of credit but shall be in addition to the proceeds of the bond or the letter of credit.
- (5) Any other investments that are approved by the Commissioner.

(d) All bonds or securities that are posted as a security deposit shall be valued annually at market value. If the market value is less than the face value, the Commissioner may require the self-insurer to post additional securities. In making this determination, the Commissioner shall consider the self-insurer's or guarantor's financial condition, the amount by which market value is less than face value, and the likelihood that the securities will be needed to provide benefits.

(e) Securities deposited under this section shall be assigned to the Commissioner, the Commissioner's successors, assigns, or trustees, on a form prescribed by the Commissioner in a manner that renders the securities negotiable by the Commissioner. If a self-insurer or guarantor is deemed by the Commissioner to be in a hazardous financial condition, the Commissioner may sell or collect, or both, such amounts that will yield sufficient funds to meet the self-insurer's obligations under the Act. In the case of a letter of credit, the Commissioner may draw the full amount of a letter of credit if the letter of credit is not renewed within 90 days prior to its expiration or at any time that the bank issuing the letter of credit is no longer acceptable to the Commissioner. Interest accruing on any negotiable security deposited under this Article shall be collected and transmitted to the self-insurer if the self-insurer or guarantor is not in a hazardous financial condition.

(f) No judgment creditor, other than a claimant entitled to benefits under the Act, may levy upon any deposits made under this section.

(g) Pursuant to the provisions of this section and with the approval of the Commissioner, deposits held by the Commissioner may be replaced with other acceptable

forms of deposit in amount determined by the Commissioner. Any deposit to be replaced with another form of deposit shall not be released until the approved replacement deposit is received by the Commissioner.

(h) Any self-insurer that ceases to self-insure, whether by voluntary termination or by revocation of license, shall continue to secure and be liable for its obligations under the Act and shall continue to report to the Commissioner pursuant to G.S. 97-180. Upon the request of the Commissioner, a self-insurer that ceases to self-insure shall submit filings, as prescribed in G.S. 97-180, to determine whether the deposit is sufficient to satisfy those workers' compensation obligations incurred during the period that the self-insurer was licensed as a self-insurer. The Commissioner may require an increase in the deposit amount or may grant a reduction in the deposit amount to ensure that the deposit is sufficient to cover all existing and future obligations incurred by the self-insurer while subject to the provisions of the Act.

(i) An endorsement to a surety bond shall be filed with the Commissioner within 90 days after the effective date of the endorsement. (1997-362, s. 4; 2003-115, ss. 3, 4, 5; 2005-400, s. 13; 2009-242, ss. 2, 3, 4; 2011-196, s. 11.)